

Agency Information

AGENCY : FBI  
RECORD NUMBER : 124-90100-10234  
RECORD SERIES : HQ  
AGENCY FILE NUMBER : 52-72398-233

Released under the John  
F. Kennedy  
Assassination Records  
Collection Act of 1992  
(44 USC 2107 Note).  
Case#:NW 54027 Date:  
08-25-2017

Document Information

ORIGINATOR : FBI  
FROM : MM  
TO : HQ

TITLE :

DATE : 12/03/1959  
PAGES : 9

SUBJECTS :

STUART SUTOR  
JOSEPH RAYMOND MEROLA

DOCUMENT TYPE : PAPER, TEXTUAL DOCUMENT  
CLASSIFICATION : Unclassified  
RESTRICTIONS : 4  
CURRENT STATUS : Redact

DATE OF LAST REVIEW : 07/29/1998

OPENING CRITERIA : INDEFINITE

COMMENTS : AT

MM 52-3290

It is to be noted that ARTHUR WILLIAM MILLER, a former PCI of this office, was Acting Manager of the Garden of Allah Motel during Oct. and Nov., 1958. MILLER, FBI# 299033B, is now serving a prison sentence of 18 months for Grand Larceny at the Florida State Penitentiary at Raiford, Florida. His number there is 66234.

During the time that MILLER was a PCI, he was contacted on various occasions during Oct. and Nov., 1958, relative to the activities of JOSEPH R. MEROLA and other hoodlums at the Garden of Allah Motel. MEROLA, who was also the subject of a separate investigation as a suspected jewel thief, was interviewed during that same period of time at the Garden of Allah by SA C. GRAHAM HURST. The following pertinent info was then developed:

On September 29, 1958, MEROLA was interviewed at 6:00 PM, at the Garden of Allah by SA HURST. He advised SA HURST that he had flown from Miami to NYC on or about August 28, 1958; had stayed at the Warwick Hotel, and had returned to Miami, Fla., at 2:30 AM, 9/29/58, via flight 647, airline unidentified.

During this interview, a man came into the motel lobby and went up to MEROLA. MEROLA introduced this man to SA HURST as being JOSE B. ALEMAN, owner of the Tradewinds Motel, Miami Beach. MEROLA told SA HURST that on 8/3/58, he registered with the US Department of Justice as an agent for the Revolutionary Civic Front, as a public relations man. He said he obtained the papers necessary for filing, and had sent them to the Justice Department from an attorney representing ALEMAN.

MM 52-3290

It is to be noted that ALEMAN was also the recognized leader of a group known as "Cuba Rebelde", which was at that time engaged in anti-BATISTA revolutionary activities in Miami. ALEMAN did not participate in the interview between SA HURST and MEROLA, but sat in another part of the lobby.

On 10/3/58, from 11:00 AM until 12:16 PM, SA HURST again talked with MEROLA in the lobby of the same motel. During this conversation, an unidentified Cuban came up to MEROLA and said that "JOSE" wanted to see MEROLA. MEROLA then attempted to stop this Cuban from saying anything else in the presence of SA HURST, pointing out that SA HURST was an Agent with the FBI. It appeared that the "JOSE" referred to may have been JOSE B. ALEMAN.

On 10/6/58, SA HURST interviewed MEROLA in the lobby of the same motel. MEROLA disclosed he had left Miami on 10/3/58, and had flown to NYC and had returned to Miami during the early morning hours of 10/6/58. He disclosed a bankruptcy hearing was held on the afternoon of 10/3/58, and that the Garden of Allah would have to go into bankruptcy.

On 10/25/58, former PCI MILLER advised that MEROLA was at the Garden of Allah Motel each day during the week, beginning 10/19/58, and up until 10/23/58, when he heard that MEROLA had left town.

On 10/28/58, MILLER advised SA HURST that MEROLA returned to Miami on the mid-afternoon of 10/26/58, or the early morning of 10/27/58. MEROLA was around the Garden of

MM 52-3290

Allah on 10/28/58. MILLER said that a larger number of Cubans than usual asked for MEROLA on 10/28/58. MILLER said that almost every day several Cubans came to the motel looking for MEROLA and that many of these Cubans could not speak English.

On 10/29/58, MILLER said he did not see MEROLA at the Garden of Allah on that day and did not know if MEROLA was in or out of town.

On 10/31/58, MILLER said that early on 10/31/58, MEROLA told the switchboard operator at the motel that he was not in to anyone. MILLER said that on the next 3 occasions on 10/31/58, four or five Cubans came to the motel asking for MEROLA. On the afternoon of 10/31/58, the Cubans left a note for MEROLA which note indicated that MEROLA was giving the Cubans the run-around and they wanted \$6,000 or else.

MILLER said he did not see MEROLA at the motel on 10/30/58. MILLER said that in his position he has access to the rooms in the basement of the motel and that in the past MEROLA had some boxes there, but he did not know what the boxes contained.

On 11/3/58, MILLER said he saw MEROLA in the motel on 11/1, 2, and 3/58. MILLER said he had occasion to go into the rooms in the basement of the motel on 11/1/58, at which time the boxes he had previously seen there belonging to MEROLA, were no longer there.

On 11/5/58, MILLER said he saw MEROLA at the motel on the morning of 11/4/58, and again on the morning of 11/5/58. He said the Cubans who left the note

MM 52-3290

for MEROLA on 10/31/58, had been back to the motel at least once each day since that time, apparently attempting to contact MEROLA.

On 11/5/58, these Cubans left another note for MEROLA reflecting that MEROLA had not kept his appointment and they still wanted their money. MILLER furnished the license number of the car driven by these Cubans, which was a light blue sedan bearing 1958 Fla. tag 1W-110905. The records of the Dade Co. Auto Tag Agency, Miami, reflect this license was issued to A. VALDEZ ZAMBRANA, 426 NW 13th Ave., Miami, for a 1956 two-door Chrysler.

On 11/21/58, Lt. A. H. "RED" LEONARD (NA), Miami Beach PD, advised that at 9:15 PM, 11/11/58, while a check was being made of the parking lot next to the Garden of Allah Motel, the Miami Beach PD arrested 3 Cubans as follows:

ANTONIO BRIONES, born 6/24/39, at Havana, Cuba, who was in possession of a US Army .45 caliber automatic weapon, SN 301936.

ANTONIO ZAMBRANA, born 1/17/25, at Havana, Cuba, residence 426 NW 13th Ave., Miami, Fla.

LORENZO BURUNAT, born 1/19/34, at Oriente, Cuba.

These men also had in their possession a bullet proof vest and 3 clips of ammunition for an Italian-type rifle. These men were booked for carrying concealed

MM 52-3290

weapons. They claimed they had gone to the Garden of Allah Motel to see JOE MEROLA.

Previous investigation has disclosed that on 10/24, 27, and 31, 1958, and 11/1, 3, 4, and 8, 1958, JOE MEROLA placed phone calls to a phone listed to LUCIANO SANCHEZ, 426 NW 13th Ave., Miami. SANCHEZ was then the landlord of ZAMBRANA and had personally seen MEROLA in contact with ZAMBRANA.

LEADS

JACKSONVILLE:

AT RAIFORD, FLORIDA

Will interview former PCI MILLER as follows:

1. Ascertain if he is willing to testify in this case, it being noted that info previously furnished by him was done on a confidential basis.

2. Obtain identity and address, if possible, of the former engineer at the Garden of Allah Motel, whose first name was RALPH.

3. Exhibit photographs of subjects and suspects in this case to MILLER, including the photo of Dr. LOUIS C. PESSOLANO, who was contacted by SAMMY MANNARINO while at the Garden of Allah Motel, room 104, from 9/29/58, to 10/4/58.

MM 52-3290

4. Ascertain full details re boxes kept by MEROLA in basement garage storage room, and will determine specifically whether or not MILLER knew these boxes contained rifles and if so, complete descriptive data, including any labels on said boxes.

4. Will obtain complete facts re contacts between MANNARINO and MEROLA, it being noted that instant National Guard robbery took place on 10/14/58, only ten days after MANNARINO left the Garden of Allah Motel.

6. Thoroughly interview MILLER re identities of Cubans and nature of contacts with MEROLA, particularly ZAMBRANA.

These leads should be handled at once in view of pending prosecution, which is scheduled for November or December, ~~1958~~, at Pittsburgh, Pa.  
1959

Enclosed to Jacksonville are photographs of the following individuals:

One photo of STUART SUTOR.

Three photos of SAMMY MANNARINO.

One photo of NORMAN ROTHMAN.

One photo of JOSEPH R. MEROLA.

One photo of VICTOR CARLUCCI.

One photo of JOSEPH GIORDANO.

One photo of DANIEL HANNA.